



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact:

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Governor's Workforce Board

\$2M in Grants Available to Improve Workforce

CRANSTON – The Governor's Workforce Board-RI (GWB-RI) is offering grants up to \$30,000 per company in matching funds to train employees. The 2006 Workforce Improvement Grant Program is designed for profit and not-for-profit employers, with training programs tailor-made to address the specific needs of the organization. Improving an employer's existing workforce enables that organization to perform more efficiently and be more competitive.

"Giving our workers the skills they need to compete and to fill jobs in Rhode Island is the key to our state's economic prosperity," Governor Donald L. Carcieri observed. "As a former businessman, I recognize that a highly trained workforce is important in our efforts to attract new companies to Rhode Island and grow new jobs for our citizens. Consequently, I want to strongly support and encourage local businesses to train their employees, so they have the skills to compete today and in the future. The Workforce Improvement Grant Program will help us do that."

Governor's Workforce Board-RI Chairman Joseph MarcAurele explains, "This board's mission is to develop, implement, and support strategies that improve the skill base of the workforce and to meet the current and future demands of Rhode Island's businesses. Incumbent worker training is a priority for us."

Companies eligible for these grants contribute to Rhode Island's Job Development Fund, pay employees at least \$10.13 per hour (150% of minimum wage), and match half of allowable training expenses. Employees to be trained must have been employed at least six months. Training programs will begin May 1, 2006.

The Job Development Fund (JDF) is a 0.21 percent assessment on Rhode Island's employer payroll tax. The JDF is revenue neutral because the unemployment payroll tax liability was reduced by the same amount. The fund ensures \$10 million is available annually to finance workforce development initiatives.

A Pre-proposal Conference will be held on Wednesday, February 1st at 8:00 AM at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 801 Greenwich Avenue, Warwick. Attendance is strongly urged, as board staff will be reviewing applications in detail. The Request for Proposal (RFP) will be made available on Monday, January 23rd at the following locations: The GWB-RI Office, netWORKri Career Centers, Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston, Chambers of Commerce, or visit the State Workforce Investment Office web site at www.dlt.ri.gov/WIO. For questions or directions to any of these locations, call Lori Del Rossi at (401) 462-8863.

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The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training offers a wide array of employment and training services to both the general public and to individuals with unusual barriers to employment. DLT is ready to assist any job seeker, whether the goal is a first job, a better job, or a career change. Rhode Island's work force is protected through the enforcement of labor laws, prevailing wage rates, and work place health and safety standards. Temporary income support is available to unemployed, sick, or injured workers and a comprehensive rehabilitation program is available to those injured on the job.

DLT is dedicated to the growth and competitiveness of Rhode Island industry, administering a variety of training grants, tax credits, and apprenticeship programs to help employers. Economic indicators and labor market information are available for long-range planning. The Agency engages in active outreach, helping large and small employers retain their best workers or retrain their existing work force. At no cost to the employer, DLT will also screen job applicants, post job vacancies, and help businesses institute cost-sharing programs that can avert layoffs.

For more information on the innovative programs and services available to all Rhode Islanders at the Department of Labor and Training, please call (401) 462-8000 or visit the web site at www.dlt.ri.gov.

*Equal Opportunity Employer
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities
TDD (401) 462-8006*

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